



New Age Movement

Dr. Shawn Nelson, 2022

8 Week Class Schedule

- DONE** Introduction
- DONE** Yogananda & Self Realization Fellowship
- TODAY** New Age Movement
- Nov 7 Islam (Part 1)
- Nov 14 Islam (Part 2)
- Nov 21 Jehovah's Witnesses
- Nov 28 Mormonism
- Dec 5 Judaism



Outline

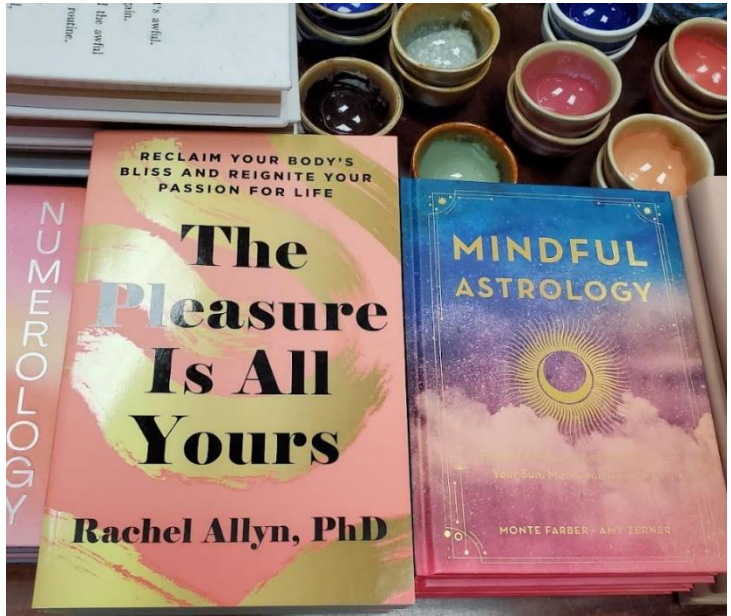
New Age Movement

- **Impact**
- Development
- Beliefs
- A Christian Response
- Ideas for Sharing





Take a walk with me down Encinitas on the 101!









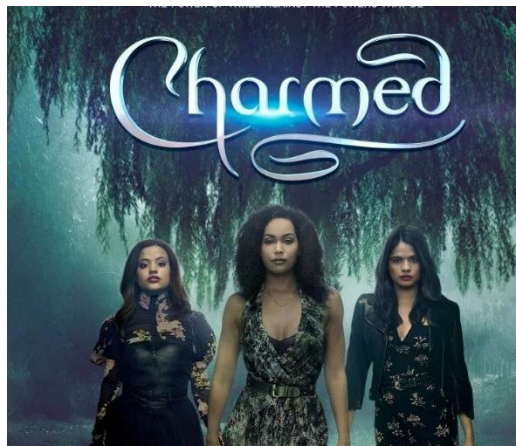


"May the Force be with you!"

It's everywhere in movies and TV!

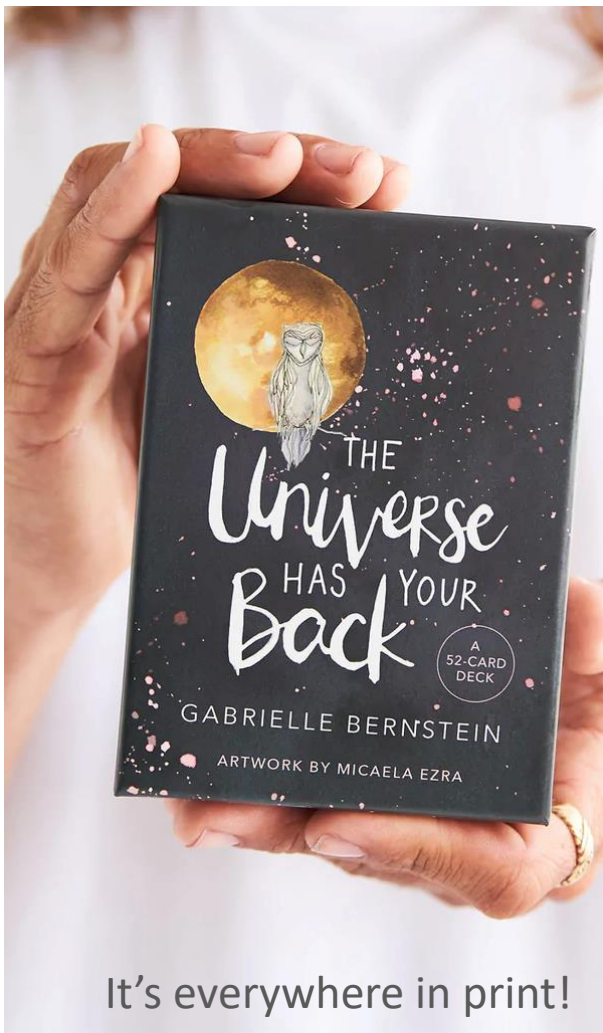


"She's [Neytiri] always going on about the **flow of energy**, the spirit of animals. She talks about a network of energy that **flows through all living things**. All energy is only borrowed and one day you have to give it back."
– Jake

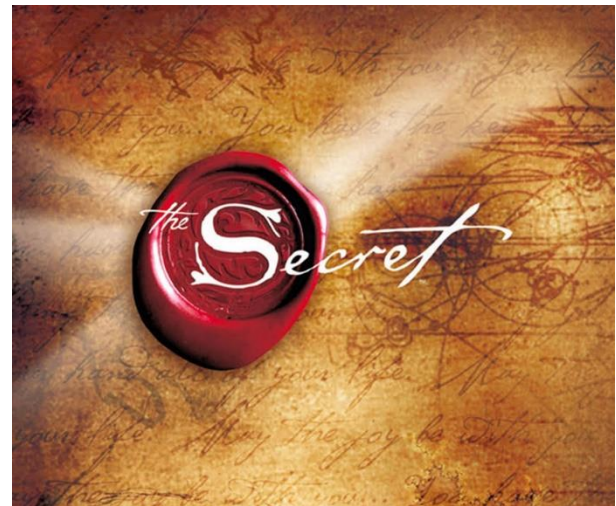
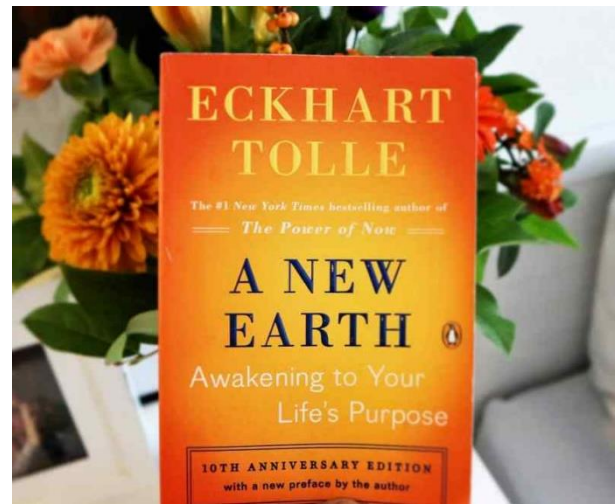
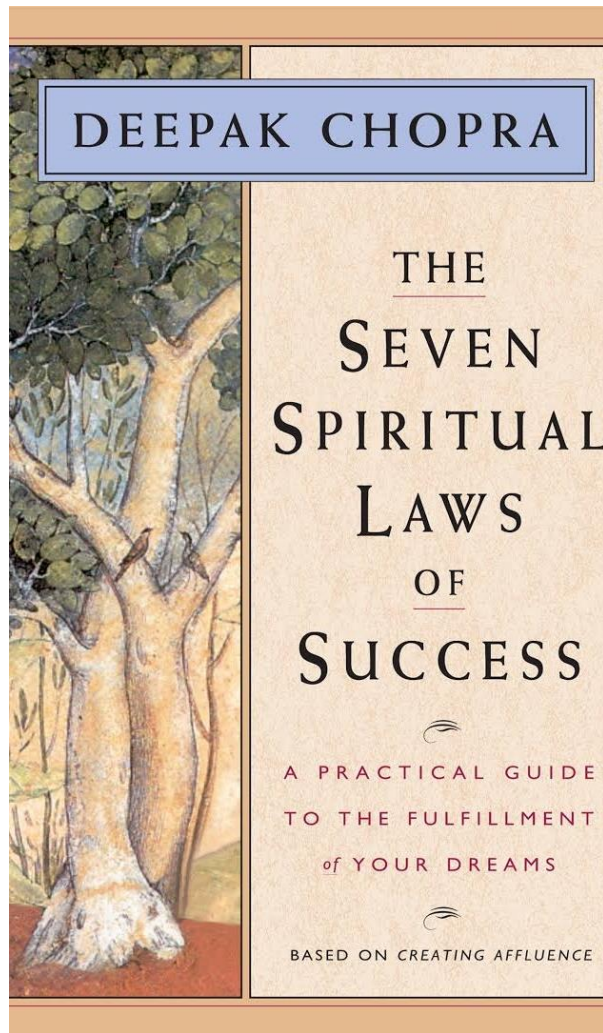








It's everywhere in print!





START YOUR SUMMER OFF RIGHT WITH

YOGA

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REDUCE YOUR STRESS | ENJOY THE OUTDOORS | RELAX YOUR BODY

FRIDAY JUNE 30TH
6:00AM - 8:00AM

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Register before June 20th
at Yoga Studio

FOR MORE INFORMATION
Please contact Sophie
or sophie@yogastudio.com
or visit www.yogastudio.com



It's everywhere!

- **Yoga and meditation** taught in **community centers, public schools, business seminars, malls.**

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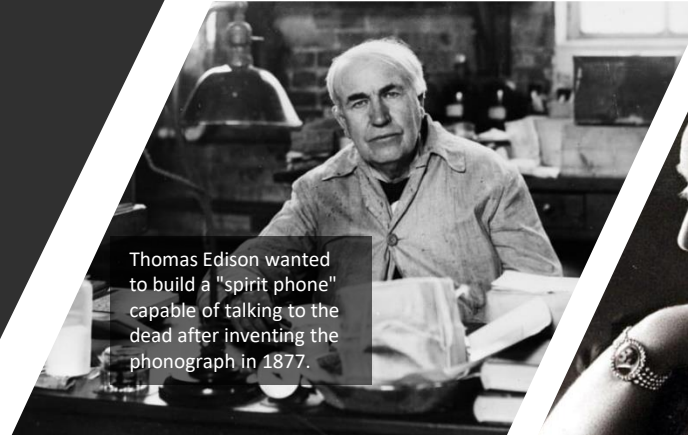


5 factors leading to rise of New Age

How did it come to be so popular today?

#1. Interest in Spiritism

- Sending messages between the human and spirit worlds was popular in mid-19th to 20th centuries.
- 1848, New York. Two sisters, Margaret and Kate Fox, claimed they could contact people beyond the grave.
- Reaction to age of 18th century scientific rationality and materialism (people are spiritual).



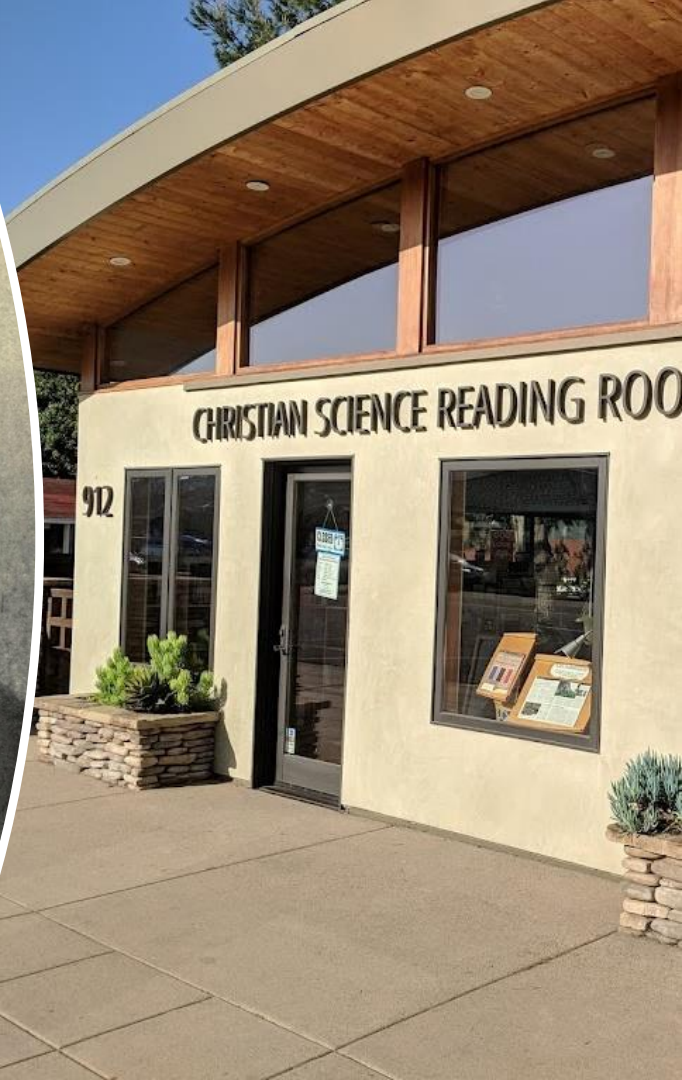
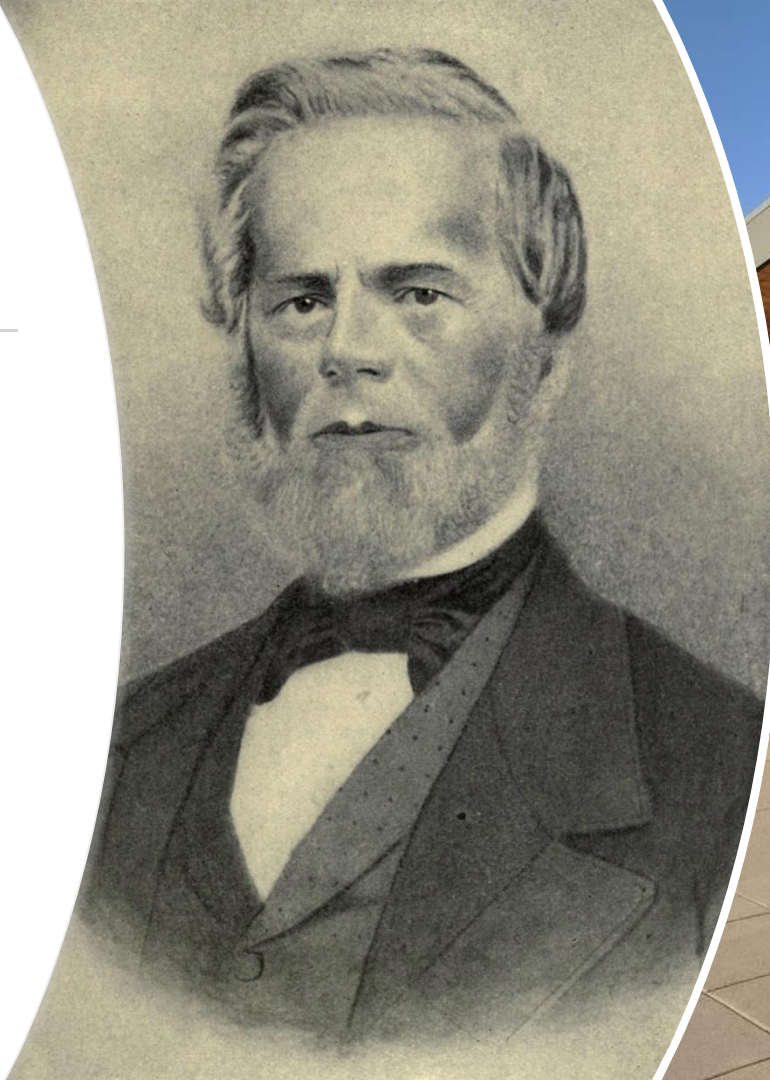
Thomas Edison wanted to build a "spirit phone" capable of talking to the dead after inventing the phonograph in 1877.

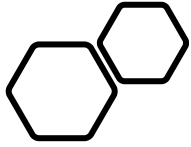


Queen Victoria often sought her dead husband's advice (Prince Albert) in political matters.

#2. New Thought

- Another influence was Phineas Quimby (1802-1866).
- From Quimby came the **Mind Science** groups:
 - Christian Science (Mary Baker Eddy)
 - Unity School of Christianity
 - Church of Religious Science
- Teach power of the mind over matter, sin, sickness.





#3. The Theosophical Society

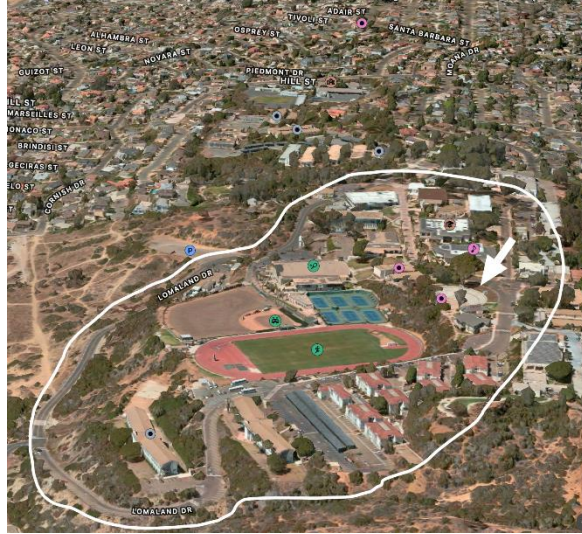
Founded in 1875.

International headquarters in Point Loma (1900-1942).

Taught:

- Unity of religions
- Universal brotherhood
- Tap into spiritual powers of man
- Ascended masters
- Communication with spirit guides through seances

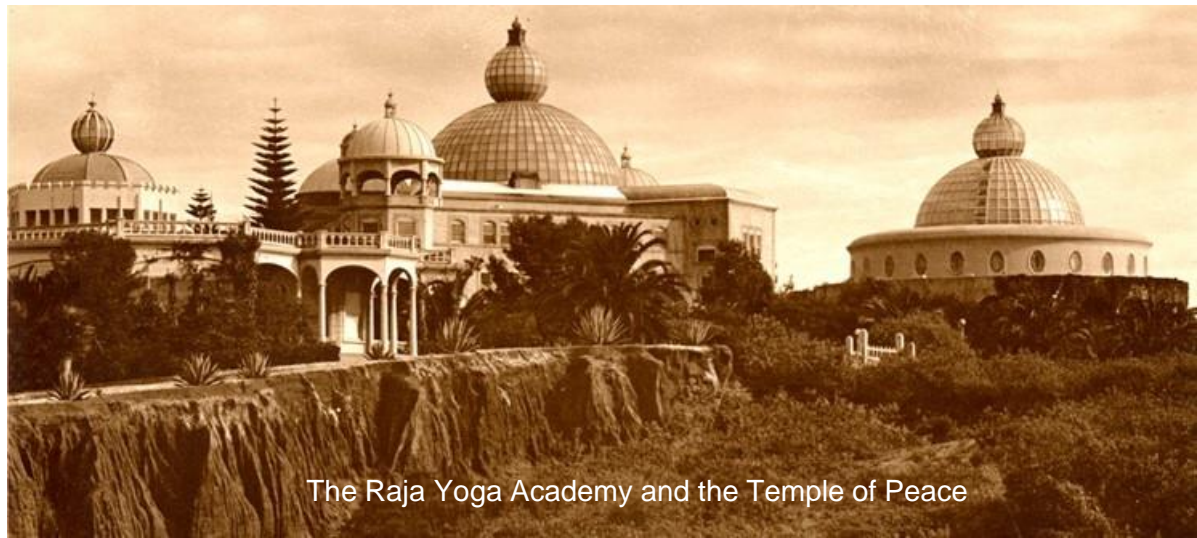
It's now Point Loma Nazarene University!



Original amphitheater still at PLNU



PLNU admin building;
originally Albert Spalding home




The Raja Yoga Academy and the Temple of Peace

#4. Popular Authors

- Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882)
- Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952)
- D. T. Suzuki (1870-1966)
- Alan Watts (1915-1973)
- Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1918-2008) & Transcendental Meditation
- Actors like Shirley MacLaine (Out On A Limb, 1983).





#5. 1960s Counterculture

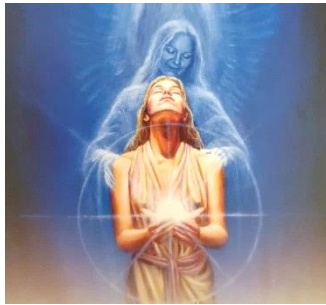
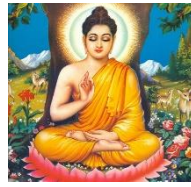
- Rejection of parent's generation
- Experimentation with drugs, LSD
- Rise of the hippie/alternative lifestyles
- Exploration of Eastern worldviews
- Anti-authoritarian movements
- Anti-war, pro-peace
- Concern for environmentalism

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A Mix of Beliefs

- Eclecticism.
- More of “a movement.”

A person might believe any of the following...



View of God

- All personal perspectives on the divine as equally valid.
- **Pantheism.** Everything is God.
- **Unknowable.** Divinity cannot be comprehended by the human mind or language.
- Described as: "Ocean of Oneness", "Infinite Spirit", "Primal Stream", "One Essence", and "Universal Principle"
- **Impersonal.** The divine is a form of "energy," "life force" or "love."

View of People

- People are **divine** in essence.
 - Humans are "droplet of divinity."
 - Will hear talk about our "inner Godhead" and "divine self."
- Personal transformation
 - People are on upward path of **spiritual evolution**.
 - Called "enlightenment," "attunement," "self-realization," "God-realization," and "self-actualization."
- Some believe in reincarnation; others believe the soul returns to a "universal energy."





Ecology Minded

- View the Earth as a **single living organism**
- Say the Earth has **consciousness** and **intelligence**
- Push for **planetary transformation** through groups like “the Green movement”
- Desire greater **global unity**
- Belief there is a **new world coming** which involves one-world government, global socialism, and a New Age religion.



Astrology

They view history divided into **spiritual ages** following the **zodiac**. Each age lasts 2000 to 2400 years.

Humanity was **once in advanced age** of spiritual wisdom. But fell into spiritual decline (**Age of Pisces**).

We have now entered or will soon enter the **Age of Aquarius**. (Dates given: 1967, 1987, 2012, and near future.)

This is why it's called "**New Age.**"



What's the Age of Aquarius?

- Believed a better way of life for humanity is dawning
- Characterized by **love, joy, peace, abundance, and harmony.**
- Will be **end to violence**, crime and war, a healthier environment
- Humans evolving into totally **spiritual beings** and experiencing unlimited love, bliss, and happiness
- International co-operation/global government could be **brought through spirits, extraterrestrials**, or just by humans becoming spiritually evolved.



That song from the 60s!

“**Harmony** and understanding
Sympathy and **trust abounding**
No more falsehoods or derisions
Golden living dreams of visions
Mystic crystal revelation
And the **mind's true liberation**
Aquarius! Aquarius!”

...

“**This is the dawning of the Age of Aquarius**
The Age of Aquarius
Aquarius! Aquarius!”

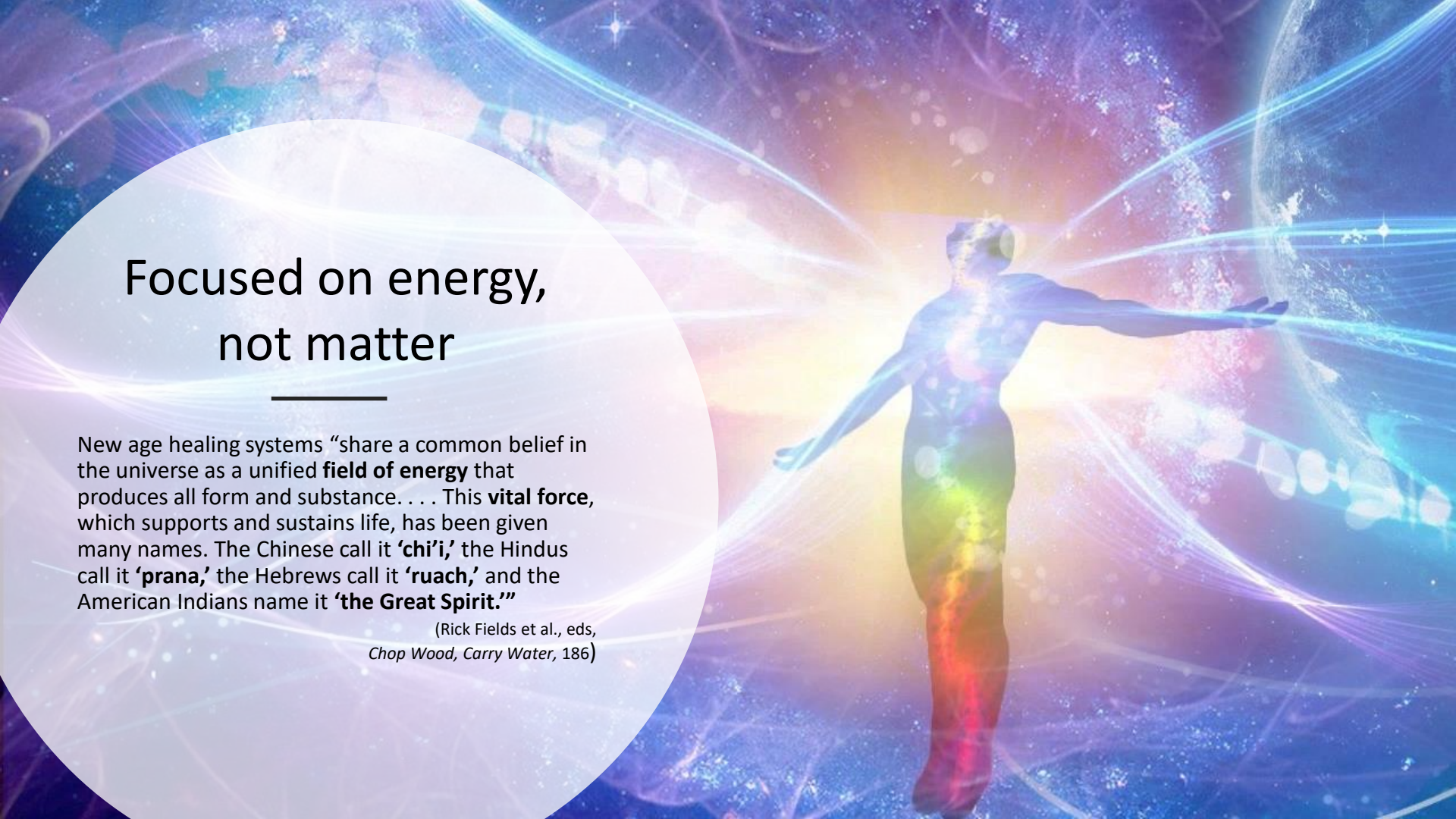
Age Of Aquarius, 5th Dimension, 1969



Healing

- Strong focus on healing using **alternative medicine**
- Health is our natural state; illness is a disruption in the natural balance
- Emphasis on relationship between **mind, body, and spirit**
- Must take holistic approach to healing by integrating with the **powers of the universe**





Focused on energy, not matter

New age healing systems “share a common belief in the universe as a unified **field of energy** that produces all form and substance. . . . This **vital force**, which supports and sustains life, has been given many names. The Chinese call it ‘**chi’i**,’ the Hindus call it ‘**prana**,’ the Hebrews call it ‘**ruach**,’ and the American Indians name it ‘**the Great Spirit**.’”

(Rick Fields et al., eds,
Chop Wood, Carry Water, 186)

Crystal Healing

- Semiprecious stones & crystals believed to boost **low energy**, prevent **bad energy**, release **blocked energy**, and transform a body's **aura**
- Practitioner place crystals on different parts of the body, often corresponding to **chakras**
- Or they place crystals around the body to **construct an energy grid** which surrounds them with healing energy





Other Common Practices

acupuncture

iridology

aromatherapy

massages

biofeedback

meditation

chiropractic

music

chromotherapy

psychic healing

crystal healing

reincarnation therapy

herbal medicine

visualization

homeopathy

yoga



Channeling

- Belief in **semi-divine** non-human entities like **angels and masters** that humans can communicate with.
- People go into a **trance**, sometimes use **automatic writing**.
- **Receive guidance** from gods and goddesses, ascended masters, spirit guides, extraterrestrials, angels, devas, historical figures, the collective unconscious, elementals, or nature spirits.
- These messages are seen as on par with scriptures of main world religions.

Occultism

Latin *occultus* means “hidden, secret” or “knowledge of the hidden.”

Definition:

“esoteric **supernatural beliefs** and practices which generally fall **outside the scope of religion and science**, encompassing phenomena involving otherworldly agency, such as **magic, sorcery, and mysticism** and their **varied spells.**” (“Occult,” Wikipedia)

It refers to "knowledge of the paranormal", as opposed to scientific knowledge.





Wicca

- Wicca can be linked with New Age.
- Called “Wicca” because less controversial than “Witchcraft.”
- Worship of a **Horned God** and a **Mother Goddess**, which is believed to be the deities worshipped by our ancient ancestors.
- Most are men; don’t like being called evil; many don’t believe in Satan.

Magic

- Many Wiccans believe magic to be a **law of nature** that is disregarded by contemporary science.
- Wiccans cast spells or "workings" intended to bring about **real changes** in the physical world.
- For **healing**, for **protection**, **fertility**, or to banish negative influences
- "White magic" is for good; "black magic" for harm.





Paganism

- New Age spirituality involves a **revival of paganism** (neopaganism).
- **They reject:**
 - **Organized** religion.
 - **Male-dominated** society.
 - Patriarchal, **male-exalting** religions.
- They emphasize “the **Goddess.**”

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“Jesus is one of many
ascended masters”

Response: Bible says Jesus is the unique Son of God.

- John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that he gave his ***one and only Son***, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (*monogenes* means the only one; cf. Luke 9:38)
- 1 Timothy 2:5 – “For there is one God and ***one mediator*** between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus”



“We achieve godhood
through works.”

**Response: Bible says we are saved
by grace.**

- Ephesians 2:8, 9 – “For it is by ***grace you have been saved, through faith***—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.”
- We are **justified by faith** in the finished work of Christ alone (Rom. 3:20-23; 5:1; 6:23; Gal. 3:24).

“There are many paths to God.”

Bible says Jesus is the *only* way to God/heaven.

- John 14:6 – Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father ***except through me.***”
- Acts 4:12 – “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is ***no other name*** under heaven given to mankind ***by which we must be saved.***”
- 1 Timothy 2:5,6 – “For there is one God and ***one mediator*** between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people.”



“We should awaken the Christ-consciousness within.”

Response: Jesus was sent to atone for our sins, not to show us how to become ‘a Christ.’

- While he did leave an example (1 Pet. 2:21), his primary purpose for dying on cross was to **provide atonement for sin** (Mk. 10:45; 1 Pet. 3:18), not show us any way to attain God-consciousness.
 - Mark 10:45 – “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to *give his life as a ransom for many.*”
 - 1 Peter 3:18 – “For Christ also **suffered once for sins**, the righteous for the unrighteous, **to bring you to God.**”
- “Christ” is Greek for Messiah. He did not discover a “Christ principle” but was fulfilling all OT prophecies about coming Messiah.






“We must worship
creation.”

**Response: Bible says we must
only worship God.**

- Deuteronomy 4:19 – “And when you look up to the sky and see the sun, the moon and the stars—all the heavenly array—do not be enticed into **bowing down to them and worshipping** [them]...”
- Romans 1:25 – “They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and **worshiped and served created things** rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.”
- Luke 4:8 – “And Jesus answered [Satan] and said to him, “It is written, ‘**YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD AND SERVE HIM ONLY.**’”



“We will be
reincarnated.”

**Response: Bible says we
will be resurrected.**

- John 5:28–29 “...an hour is coming, in which all who are in **the tombs** shall hear His [Jesus’s] voice, and shall come forth; those who did the good deeds to a **resurrection of life**, those who committed the evil deeds to a **resurrection of judgment.**”
- Matthew 25:46 – “And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

“Truth is within.”


Response: God’s Word (the Bible) is truth.

- John 17:17 – “Sanctify them by the truth; **your word is truth.**”
- Romans 12:2 – “Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but **be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Warns against trusting “own truth”:

- Judges 21:25 – “In those days there was no king in Israel; **everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**”
- Proverbs 14:12 – “There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the **way of death.**”
- Jeremiah 17:9 – “The **heart is deceitful** above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”





“We should contact the
dead or spirits for
guidance.”

Bible says we should not consult mediums or trust every spirit.

- Deuteronomy 18:10, 11 “Let no one be found among you who sacrifices their son or daughter in the fire, who **practices divination** or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a **medium or spiritist** or who **consults the dead.**”
- 1 Timothy 4:1 – “...in later times some will abandon the faith and follow **deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.**”
- 2 Corinthians 11:14 – “...**Satan** himself masquerades as an angel of light.”
- 1 John 4:1 – “...**do not believe every spirit**, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God...”

A scenic sunset over a beach. The sky is filled with vibrant orange, yellow, and red clouds, with the sun low on the horizon. The ocean is calm, reflecting the colors of the sky. In the foreground, there are large, dark, jagged rocks. The background shows a coastline with mountains or hills under a clear sky.

“We must turn from our
ignorance.”

Bible says we must turn from our sin.

- Luke 13:3 – Jesus said, “unless you repent, you too will all perish.”
- Acts 3:19 – Peter said, “**Repent**, then, and **turn to God**, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord”
- 2 Chronicles 7:14 – “...if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will **forgive their sin** and will heal their land.”

“Wait for Maitreya who will establish a global government and world peace.”

Bible says we must wait for Jesus’s second coming.

- Matthew 24:44 – “So you also must be ready, because the **Son of Man will come** at an hour when you do not expect him.”
- Acts 1:11 – “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, **will come back** in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.”
- Revelation 1:7 – “**Look, he is coming** with the clouds, and “every eye will see him, even those who pierced him...”

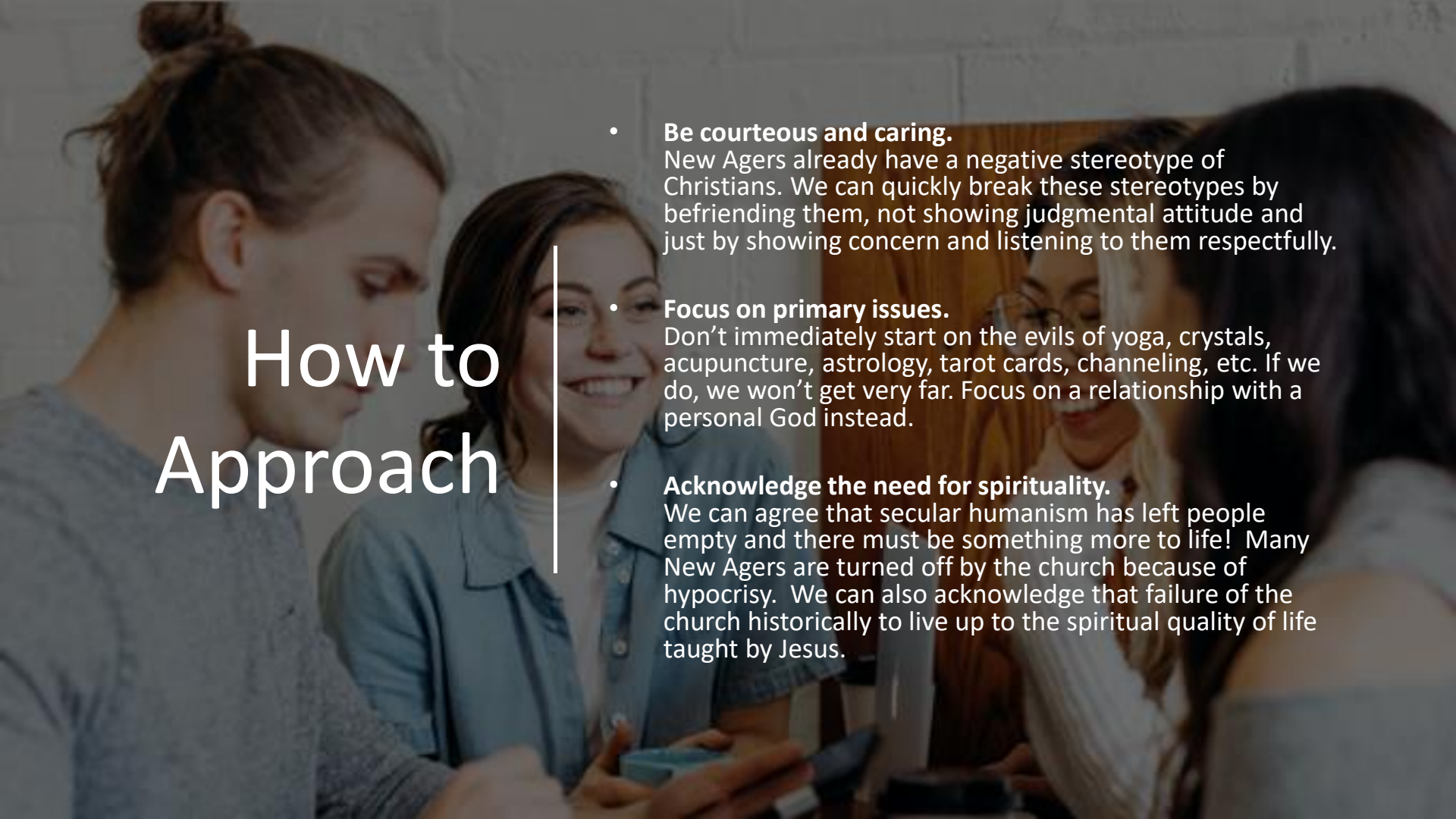


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How to Approach

- **Be courteous and caring.**
New Agers already have a negative stereotype of Christians. We can quickly break these stereotypes by befriending them, not showing judgmental attitude and just by showing concern and listening to them respectfully.
- **Focus on primary issues.**
Don't immediately start on the evils of yoga, crystals, acupuncture, astrology, tarot cards, channeling, etc. If we do, we won't get very far. Focus on a relationship with a personal God instead.
- **Acknowledge the need for spirituality.**
We can agree that secular humanism has left people empty and there must be something more to life! Many New Agers are turned off by the church because of hypocrisy. We can also acknowledge that failure of the church historically to live up to the spiritual quality of life taught by Jesus.



How to Approach

- **Don't assume terms mean the same.**
Your friend might use Christian words like “Jesus,” “Christ,” “atonement,” “ascension,” But don't assume they're using them the same way as the Bible. Ask them what they mean by these words. Then explain how the Bible uses them.
- **Share about your personal relationship with God.**
Emphasize to the New Ager that the idea of an impersonal God is utterly unsatisfying because one cannot have a personal relationship with a force. You might share your own testimony of what your personal relationship with God means to you.

Questions

1. Should Christians also be concerned about protecting the planet?
2. How could belief in a future world leader/government fits into the end times scenario?
3. Should Christian parents allow their children to watch movies with New Age or occultic themes? Why or why not?
4. How should Christians view the spirit realm?



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